The Principles of Islam



Compiled by

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Translation and Commentary by

Mahmoud Ridha Murad

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COOPERATIVE OFFICE FOR CALL GUIDANCE

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COOPERATIVE OFFICE FOR CALL AND GUIDANCE IN AL- BATHA

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The Meaning and Essence of Islam

The lexical meaning of Islam is submission, and adherence to the commands of Allah without objection. This is the true essence of Islam. By obeying Allah and observing His commands, the Muslim would be in harmony with the universe in which he lives, for everything in this universe abides by the commands of Allah.

It is an established fact that everything in this universe follows certain rule, and an unalterable law to which it submits; the sun, the moon, the stars, the night, the day, the land, the trees, and the beasts; all submit to a rule which Allah, the Creator, has designated for all these things. Even man himself, when you consider his physical construction, and biological compounds, his need for water and nutrition, heat, air, light, rest, or sleep you would find him submitting to a law under

which he has no choice, just like other creatures.

This inclusive law to which everything submits, is the work of Allah, the Majestic King, to Whom belong the creation and the authority. Both of the upper and the lower worlds submit willingly to the Creator, the Capable King.

Due to the fact that the linguistic meaning of Islam is submission, and adherence without objection, Islam, from this point of view, is the faith of the universe. Man in this sense, does not differ from the other creatures. Since Allah, is the Creator and the Provider, He has given man the freedom of choice, and has shown him both, the path of guidance, and the path of deviation through the Messengers that He sent to mankind throughout the ages; the last of whom is Muhammad, peace be upon them all. Therefore, he who chooses the path of guidance of his own free will, and fulfills the duties with which he is charged, and

refrains from the prohibition, then he becomes the legitimate Muslim.

As for him who chooses the path of deviation, neglecting the acts of worship, and committing the prohibitions, he is thus an unbeliever. Each of them will receive his requital on the Day he will meet his *Rubb*[1] when the records of deeds will be displayed. Allah says:

> So whoever does good equal to the weight of an ant shall see it and whoever does evil equal to the weight of an ant shall see it.

Based on this gift that Allah has granted man; which is one of the greatest, i.e., the freedom of choice, and after subjugating for him the land, the sea, the night and the day, Allah has commanded man to worship Him alone, and has forbidden him to ascribe

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[1] Some translate the term "*Rubb*" into 'lord, but since the meaning of '*Rubb*' is far more comprehensive than to be restricted to a single word such as 'lord'. Among other things the term '*Rubb*' means, the Creator, the Cherisher, the Sustainer, or Provider.

partners to Him, and has promised him in return great rewards for his obedience.

Among the promised rewards are the following :

1- Allowing man to benefit from the signs of Allah that are scattered throughout the universe proving the fact that Allah is the true God Who deserves to be worshipped.

2- The ability to lead a fear-free life in this world, and to render sound his state of affairs. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "How wonderful is the believer's state of affairs. All his affairs yield good consequences. If he encounters a pleasant situation, he would show gratitude to Allah, and this response would be good for him, and if he experiences distressing situation, he would endure it patiently, and it would be good for him. This applies only to the believer."

The believer knows that his duty in this world is to worship Allah alone. Allah,

has created the jinn and man only to worship Him. Allah does not seek provisions from them, nor does he ask that they should feed Him. It is He Who is the Provider, the Most Powerful.

The believer also knows that he will finally meet his *Rubb* on the Day of Requital. He also knows that he came into existence by the word of Allah who created him, cherished him, and bestowed upon him His favors, the seen and the unseen thereof, and He has subjected everything for him. Allah says:

> Do you not see that Allah has subjected for you what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, and that He has bestowed amply upon you His apparent and hidden graces[2]

And Allah says:

> Allah is the One Who has created cattle for you so that you may ride on some of them, and eat. the meat of some of them.[3]

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[2] Q. 31:20
[3] Q. 40:79

> Allah is the One Who has created the heavens and the earth, and Who sends down water from the sky, and brought forth thereby fruits as provisions for you; and He has made the ships to be of service to you, that they may sail easily through by His command, and He has also made rivers to be of service to you.[4]

And Allah says:

> Do you not see that Allah has subjected for you everything in the earth. [5]

3- The Muslim leads his life knowing that this world is not permanent, rather it is a transitory to the eternal life, and a supply station, and a starting point of a race to win the pleasure of Allah.

Consequently, the Muslim is content with whatever means of subsistence that become available for him in this world, knowing that such means are only a temporal pleasure.

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[4] Q. 22:65
[5] Q. 14:32-33

4- The believer will, on the Day of Resurrection, win the pleasure of his *Rubb*, the only means of escaping the Fire and entering Jannah. Allah says:

> He who is moved away from the Fire, and admitted to Jannah has indeed prospered, and the life of this world is but a deceiving pleasure.[6]

After this short introduction, you may want to know more Islam, the only religion acceptable to Allah. The Religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.

> If anyone desires a religion other that Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the hereafter he will be among the losers.[7]

What is the means of knowing the commands of Allah, and His laws?

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6 Q. 3:158
7 Q. 3:85

Regardless how much power, reason, or shrewdness man is given, he can never know the statutes of Allah, and His laws, commands, or prohibitions by employing such faculties. If man is unable to know what is in the mind of another human being, unless the latter expresses his thoughts verbally or practically, how would man , then, be able to know the intention of Allah, the Creator of the universe. Consequently, no one is able to make laws for the creatures except their Creator, the One who knows what is in their minds, and what is good for them, and what renders their affairs aright in the present and in the future.

It is only through the divine revelation conveyed to mankind by the Messengers who explained to their people the purposes of Allah and the means by which they may attain His pleasure. The last of those Messengers is Muhammad, son of Abdullah, the Hashimite, the last of the Messengers, peace be upon him.

KNOWING THE MESSENGERS

You have known that the Messengers are the men responsible for conveying the laws and commands of Allah. What are the means of recognizing the Messengers and the proofs of their veracity ?

Proofs of the Messengers' veracity

We have , after that , to recognize the proofs of Prophethood. Among such proofs of the Messengers' veracity are :

1- They do not seek anything for their personal interest, rather they seek things for the public interest by warning their people against what may harm them.

2- What the Messengers reported to their people about the unseen world, no one can concieve through his intellect, and yet the reality always verified their statements.

3- Every Messenger is supported by a miraculous sign that his people could not challenge or match. Noah, for example, challenged his people to kill him, yet they were unable to do so, although he was living amongst them without guards, surrounded by the disbelievers hatred. Similarly, neither the people of Ibraheem and Hood were able to harm them. Allah, the Exalted, supported Musa, peace be upon him, by making his cane to change into a snake whenever Musa wanted it to be so. While Issa, peace be upon him, healed the blind, and the leper, and revived the dead with the permission of Allah. Muhammad, peace be upon him, received the great Qur'an. Bearing in mind that he was unlettered, and did not study under the instruction of any person, yet his people were unable to produce a book similar to the Qur'an as a whole, nor were they able to produce ten chapters the like thereof. Finally, Allah challenged them to produce a single chapter similar to that in

the Qur'an, but they failed to meet the challenge. Never will any one be able to do so.

Allah says:

> If mankind and the jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they would never be able to do so even if they helped each other.[8]

Allah sent a Messenger to every nation, and supported him with a miracle that suited the nature of his people. And since Allah sent every Messenger with a Message concerning that particular nation, and because those Messages were not final nor permanent, those Messages faded away along with the nations to whom they were sent. But the Message with which Muhammad, peace be upon him, was sent is the last and perpetual. Hence, the miracles of the previous Messengers were, generally, of materialistic nature, whereas the Qur'an

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[8] Q. 17:88

is an intellectual and scientific Miracle, thus to suit the human intellect throughout the ages.

Now that you have known the means of recognizing the *deen* of Allah, the Islam, what then is Islam of which Allah approves, and accepts from His slaves? Let us explore Islam in detail. Islam as you have already known, means, submitting to the will of Allah, the Exalted with obedience. It means worshipping Allah alone, ascribing no partners to Him. Islam consists of rites and actions fulfilled by man out of obedience to Allah, and in conformity with the Message of the Messengers, the last of whom is Muhammad, peace be upon him. Muhammad's set of laws conclude all previous divine laws. Any other laws that disagree with his are null and void, because they disagree with Allah's final and permanent legislation.

These rites express the *iman*, (faith) in the heart of the believer, for whatever is

based on faith and certainty, externally or internally is the true *deen* of Islam. Islam is the means by which man acquires the pleasure of his *Rubb*, his Creator, and the means of salvation that delivers him from the torment of the Day of Resurrection.

Islam is based on five Pillars:

1- The testimony of faith: "There is no true god except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

The requirements of this Testimony is the submission and declaration that Allah is the true God, and that all other deities are false, and are not capable of neither harming or benefiting, nor do they deserve to be worshipped.

Allah is also the Ruler who has a free hand in the disposal of the affairs of the universe. People must rule by His laws and commands.

It is only the Book of Allah to Whom men should refer their disputes and affairs. Any judicial decision other that Allah's is a decision based on ignorance or pre-Islamic era, which entails injustice and deviation. All legitimate rites of worship must be dedicated to Allah alone.

Among other requirements of the Testimony of Faith is that no one should bow down, or lower his head humbly to anyone, nor supplicate another human asking him to fulfill his needs, for only Allah is capable of fulfilling man's needs.

As for the requirements of the Testimony: 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah', it entails recognition of Muhammad as the true Messenger of Allah. This Testimony also attests to his veracity, trustworthiness and infallibility in everything that he related to Allah, the Exalted, about the past, the future, and the

unseen world. Because everything he related is only revelation from Allah.

It is obligatory to obey his commands and to refrain from his prohibitions because obeying him is in fact obeying Allah. The Prophet, peace be upon him, is the one commissioned by Allah to convey His message, laws, and commands. Therefore, it is not permissible to disobey the Messenger, peace be upon him, for disobeying him means disobeying Allah.

2- A*s-Salah* :

As-Salah, or prayer is the second pillar of Islam. It begins with the purification of the body and ends with the purification of the soul. It is performed five times in the day and the night. Prayer may be considered as an energizing charge man needs whenever he tends to be heedless of the remembrance of his *Rubb*. In order to renew the contact with his *Rubb*, the

first thing man starts off his day with, is prayer. The time of the first prayer of the day begins with the dawn and ends with the sunset. Having spent the first half of the day working, heedlessness is apt to befall man; by then the mid-day *salah* or prayer becomes due for which the Muslim renews purification, and his contact with his *Rubb* asking His help, mercy, and success throughout this life, and forgiveness in the Hereafter to efface his sins and errors. Thus man moves from one prayer to another until he meets with his *Rubb*. The Messenger, peace be upon him, said:

> Consider a river running by your door in which you wash yourself five times a day. Would that spare any soiled spot on your body? (His listeners) said : "Certainly not" He said : So do the five daily prayers with which Allah effaces the sins.

Performing prayer in the masjid helps Muslims maintain strong relation with one another in brotherly atmosphere, and promotes among them love and mercy.

Prayer deters reprehensible and evil deeds. It also helps the slave in all his affairs.

Allah says :

And seek help through patience and prayer.

3- *Az-Zakat*

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam. It is a financial act of worship, which is due on the wealth kept in possession for one year. A certain percentage is taken from every kind of property to be given out to the poor to enable them meet their needs. The *Zakat* fulfills the poor's needs, and purifies the donors from selfishness, a natural tendency in men.

Allah says:

And you love wealth with exceeding love.

The *Zakat* augments the wealth, and adds *barakah* [9] to it. The Prophet, peace be upon him said: "Never will charity diminish the wealth, rather it augments it. "

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9 *Barakah* , abundant and continual good.

Thus the *Zakat* is a means of augmenting the wealth, and purifying the souls from miserliness, stinginess and selfishness. It is a manifestation of social mutual responsibility among the Muslims, that the wealthy among them may sympathize with the poor and the poor among them may love the wealthy.

After all, the *zakat* is an act of worship dedicated to Allah and a positive response to His command and a means of gaining His pleasure.

4- *As-Siyam*

As-Siyam, in the month of Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam. Through fasting all aspects of worship become integrated, and the sense of obedience, and the will to observe is strengthened. Fasting is an act of worship, and a means of bringing man closer to Allah, refining the manners, self-restraint and setting the behavior aright. It is also a means of maintaining the fear of Allah.

Allah says:

> O, you who believe fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may attain piety.

Fasting was prescribed to previous nations too as a means of purification and help against life's inconveniences, because fasting requires patience, and patience is one of the strongest means for acquiring the happiness in the Hereafter.

Allah says:

> And seek Allah's help through perseverance and prayer.

5- Hajj :

The *Hajj* is the fifth pillar of Islam. This pillar has the same objectives like those of the other pillars of Islam . The *Hajj* trains self-restraint, endurance, resisting hunger, enduring patiently the hardship of the journey, leaving the family behind, and other desirous things. The *Hajj* like the *Zakat* , has a financial aspect. It also shares

with the prayer many physical aspects such as *Tawaf*, *Saee*,[10] and moving from one ritual site to another. It includes as well, the *talbiyah*,[11] the *dthikr*[12] and the like. Hence, the *Hajj* is act an of worship involving the financial, physical, and those aspects related to prayer. Like congregational prayer, *Hajj* also is an occasion for congregating the Muslims in one place at one time, with one more distinction, that is , all Muslims then wear the same outfit regardless of their heterogeneity, home lands, tongues, or classes. The *Hajj*, in its general

10 The Sa'ee, walking back and forth seven times between the two hills of As-Safa and Marwah. One of the rites of Pilgrimage, both Umrah and Hajj, and is performed immediately after the circumambulation of the Ka'bah.

11 The recitation of the words: Labbaikallahumma Labbaik. etc. meaning: Here am I. O Allah! Here am I. Here am I declaring no associates with You. Surely, praise and blessings, and dominion are Yours. I associate none with You.

12 The remembrance of Allah as an act of worship.

manifestation is a convention that comprises all groups of Muslims who come from different countries and from different descents to attend and participate in this great beneficial function. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, made his speech in Arafat conveying to the Muslims the message from his *Rubb*, calling on Allah to be his witness that he has indeed conveyed the Message. The Muslims have the best example in the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. The *Hajj* is performed in compliance to Allah's commands. When Ibraheem, peace be upon him, had completed erecting the Ka'bah, Allah commanded him to declare to the people: Allah has enjoined *Hajj* on you. Therefore perform it. Allah says:

> And proclaim to mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel coming by every distant track.[13]

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[13] Qur'an 22:27

A Muslim who fulfills the five pillars of Islam believing that Allah is his *Rubb*, and Islam is his faith, and Muhammad is his Prophet and Messenger, and dies while upholding this belief, he will eventually gain the pleasure of his *Rubb*, and admittance to Jannah. But if a person has fulfilled the pillars of Islam without faith, it would not benefit him nor would it deliver him from the punishment promised by his *Rubb* even though he appears to be a Muslim.

THE ARTICLES OF *IMAN* (faith)

We have already mentioned that the first article of *iman* is the Testimony: "There is no true god except Allah and that Muhammad, is the Messenger of Allah", peace be upon him. The second part of the Testimony necessitates attesting to the truth that he is sent by Allah to mankind at large, and it is imperative to attest to the veracity of everything he told, to obey him, and

avoid his prohibitions. And of the things he commanded is believing in Allah. His angels His Scriptures , His Messengers, the Last Day , and the **Qada' and Qadar.**[14]

1- THE BELIEF IN ALLAH : The firm belief that Allah is the self-sufficient, who stands in need of none of His creatures. Allah is neither an offspring of previous roots, nor does He have offspring. Allah describes Himself saying: He neither begets, nor is He begotten. He is far removed from having a spouse or a son. He is qualified with all attributes of perfection.

It is imperative to believe that Allah is ever-living, unaffected by cessation or extinction, and that He is ever alert, and He is the Proprietor of all. It is also incumbent upon us to believe that intercession is valid only after He permits, and that He is the One and only, having no partner in His

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Ruboobiyyah [15], nor in His divinity, nor is there anyone to share His names and attributes. He has no intermediaries from among His creatures. It is He in Whose hand is the provision, life and death, and harm and benefit. He hears their supplications, responds to the distressed when they call Him for help. Allah's creatures stand in need of Him, while He stands in need of none. Believing in all this makes man expect relief from Allah alone, and fear Him alone, ask Him alone without going through middlemen or intercessors. Allah's creatures have no power without Him to extend benefit, or cause harm to anyone. What some allege that there are intermediaries or intercessors to whose graves they go seeking help, and whom they call, *awliya*, or the favorites of Allah is not only false allegation, but it is paramount to *shirk*, or ascribing partners to Allah, the

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15 *Ruboobiyyah* Inf. of *Rubb*.

Ever living , the All-knowing, the All-powerful.

2- THE BELIEF IN THE ANGELS:

The angels are part of the unseen world about which Allah the Exalted, has informed His Messenger Muhammad, peace be upon him. The angels are honorable slaves of Allah. Allah says:

> They do not rebel against His commands, and do exactly what they are commanded.

Allah has created the angels to worship Him, and charged them with duties that they fulfill obediently as Allah the Exalted, mentions in the Qur'an rebuffing thus what some people falsely believe that the angels are the intercessors and the daughters of Allah.

Since it is imperative to believe in the existence of the angels, it is also imperative to believe in what Allah, and

what Muhammad, peace be upon him, have informed about them, including the fact that Jibreel (Gabriel) is one of them, and that he was the one who brought down revelation to the Messengers of Allah.

Among the angels also are those who keep count of man's deeds; the record which will be shown to man on the Day of Resurrection when man will be able to recognize his record of deeds, and would deny none of its content. Once he denies any of his deeds, man's own organs will testify against him.

3- THE BELIEF IN THE DIVINE SCRIPTURES :

Believing in the divine Scriptures is one of the articles of faith. It is mandatory to believe that they are revealed and sent down by Allah. Belief in the Scriptures is of two levels; general, and particular. The general entails believing in all Scripture sent down to any of Allah's Messengers, whether

we know him by name or not. As for the particular belief, we must believe in every Scripture that is mentioned in the Qur'an by name. They are five:

1- The Qur'an, which is in our hands, the Book that was sent down to Muhammad, peace be upon him.

2- The Torah, The Old Testament, sent down to Musa, peace be upon him.

3- The Injeel, The Evangel, or The New Testament, sent down to Isa (Jesus), peace be upon him.

4- Az-Zaboor, the Psalms, sent down to Dawood, (David), peace be upon him.

5- The Sheets of Ibrahim, peace be upon him.

We know that it is obligatory to believe in all those Books. But, do we have to believe in all of the Scriptures circulated today? Or, are the Scriptures available today the same as those revealed to the Messengers of Allah? These are general questions. The

answer is that although the Scriptures that preceded the Qur'an may contain parts of the original texts, but they cannot be considered as genuine, for the following reasons:

1- The complete original texts of those Scriptures are no longer in existence. What is available today is only the translation with which the opinions of the translators, and the exegeses are mixed.

2- The original texts of those Books were not written down during the Messengers' lifetime, rather, they were written down hundreds of years thereafter. They were collected from reports given by the Messengers' followers as was the case of the Bible. The original text itself disappeared and was compiled for the second time from reports and narratives, and so was the case of the Torah.

3- All previous Scriptures were not meant to address mankind at large, rather each Book was sent to one particular nation,

for the divine Message was not completed then. Every Messenger gave his people the good news of the Messenger who would succeed him.

4- The languages of those Scriptures have been altered, or became archaic. Even if those Scriptures were available today in their original texts, it is most unlikely that there would be any people, who would be able to decode their languages, thus such Scriptures would not be valid to use without understanding their texts. As for the text of the Qur'an, it is still available in its original language in which it was sent down to Muhammad, peace be upon him. The Qur'an maintains its originality and validity for the following reasons :

1- Allah Himself has promised to preserve the Qur'an. He said :

We it is Who sent down the *Dlhikr* [16]and we are preserving it .[17]

2- The Qur'an was written down during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Whenever a verse, or a *surah* was revealed, the Messenger , peace be upon him, would dictate it to a scribe, telling him to place it in the order and the surah it belonged to. Besides, many companions had committed the Qur'an to memory, and knew the circumstantial events that prompted the revelation of the *surahs*, or the verses. All this information is compiled in authentic works.

3- Jibreel, used to review the Qur'an with the Prophet, peace be upon him, once a year. The year in which the Prophet, peace be upon him, died , Jibreel reviewed the Qur'an with him twice.

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16 Among other meanings, '*dthikr*' signifies, the Qur'an. It also signifies the Prophetic traditions.
17 Q.

4- The men around the Prophet, peace be upon him, committed the Qur'an to memory. Therefore no one would have been able to change anything in the Qur'an, for any supposed alternation would have been spotted right away by those who memorized the Qur'an.

5- The language in which the Qur'an was revealed is still the same, therefore anyone who knows Arabic can easily understand the Qur'an and the signification of its text.

6- The exegetes have separated their commentaries from the main text of the Qur'an to keep the letter chaste.

There is another important proof of the Qur'an's originality. If samples of the Qur'an copies were collected at random from Arab and non-Arab countries and compared with each other, they would have been found identical. Those who have committed the whole Qur'an to memory, would have ascertained this fact.

7- The Qur'an is the last Book revealed to the last of the Messenges.. The wisdom necessitates preserving it. Had the Qur'an been affected by any change, mankind would have been left without a chaste Book as a reference. The infinite wisdom of Allah and His mercy necessitate that Allah would not neglect His creatures, or leave them to their own whimsical opinions staggering in the darkness of ignorance, and deviation.

4- The Belief in the Messengers.

Believing in the Messengers is an article of faith. This does not mean to recognize some of the Messengers and deny the others. Rather it is obligatory to believe in all of them in general, whether we know their names or not. Those Messengers whose names are mentioned in the Qur'an must be recognized in particular. Allah has made mandatory recognizing them all, for they are like a chain whose rings are connected

to one another; everyone of them completed the Message of the proceeding Messenger until Allah has sent Mohammed, peace be upon him as the last Messenger with whom He concluded their line. Peace be upon them all. A person who acknowledges some of the Messengers, and denies the others is as though he has broken their chain.

The Qur'an mentions the names of only twenty-five Messengers. Allah says:

> And We sent Messengers whom We have already mentioned to you, and some Messengers whom We have not mentioned to you.[18]

The belief in the Messenger is indispensable due to the fact that it is impossible to know the Message of Allah without the Messengers, for it is they who conveyed His message. It is obligatory to believe in them indiscriminately.

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18 Q. 4:164

As for the privileges with which Muhammad, peace be upon him, has been distinguished, they are as follows:

1- All of the Messengers that preceded him were sent to their own peoples in particular, where as, Muhammad, peace be upon him, was sent to mankind at large, for he would be succeeded by no Prophet, or Messenger.

2- The teachings of the preceding Prophets, and the signs of their veracity had vanished along with them. The proof of Mohammed's veracity, is still and will remain effective until the end of time. His teachings are preserved in the books that are available to public.

3- The Message of Mohammed, peace be upon him, includes the Messages of the preceding Messengers. The Message and the teachings of the Messengers are like a palace which is erected by the joint efforts of men; each constructed a section thereof, and

Muhammad, peace be upon him, has completed the whole structure.

5- The belief in the Final day.

This belief necessitates :

1- Believing that this world and all that is in it has an end.

2- Allah, the exalted, will resurrect the creatures once again.

3- The people will be held accountable for their deeds. He who does good, it will be good for him, and he who errs, will suffer the consequences. Everyone will be held responsible for his own deeds.

4- Mankind's deeds are being recorded and will be reviewed by them on the Day of Reckoning.

5- The Muslim will eventually be admitted to Jannah, (the heavenly garden), and the unbeliever will be admitted to Hell Fire.

Hence, it is obvious that death is not the end of life, rather it is a borderline

between the short transitional life, and the eternal life. But will all men lead the same life ? Certainly not! They are not alike. Those who obey Allah will certainly be rewarded; and those who disobey Him will be punished. Believing in the Last Day is an intellectual necessity, for man in this world do things the results of which do not appear, or may not exist. Query! Would this world terminate in the same manner? Would the oppressor get away with his oppression, while the oppressed to be left unprotected? This surely would have been unwise and unfair. Hence, justice is indispensable, but in a world other than this; the world to come. The Prophet's authentic traditions pertaining the wOrld to come are sufficient to confirm this fact. The ultimate purpose of believing in the Day of Resurrection is to motivate the believers to make vigorous efforts to achieve good deeds, and discourage others from committing imperious deeds and acts of disobedience,

and the results of the tests and afflictions in this world will become evident in the next world.

6- The belief in *Al-Qadar*.

Believing in *Al-Qadar* is one of the central fundamentals of Islam. Allah does not accept any good deed from a person until he believes in the *al-Qadar*, even if he observes fasting, performs prayers, and claims to be a Muslim, because he did not maintain sound belief in Allah. He who does not believe in *al-Qadar*, implies that Allah is incapable, unaware of the events taking place in the universe, and impotent .Such is not fit to be a god; for among the intrinsic attributes of Allah the Ever-living, the One Who sustains and maintains the creatures, the Omnipotent, the All-Hearing, All-Seeing, and the rest of the attributes of perfection. Disbelieving in *al-Qadar* necessitates denying Allah all of these

attributes of perfection. Far is Allah removed from every imperfection.

The belief in *al-Qadar* necessitates believing that :

1- Allah has known all things and recorded them before bringing them into existence.

2- When Allah, the Exalted, wills something to take place, He would only say to it: "Be". and it is. If Allah wants something to exist, it will exist, and if He does not want it to exist, it will not exist.

3- Every existing thing, other than Allah is created by Allah, be it good or evil, and that He has brought it into existence for wise purpose known to Him. Therefore, there is nothing in the universe that exists without a wise purpose. Allah is the All-Knowing, All-Wise.

4- Nothing occurs, or takes place in this universe without the will of Allah, and His permission. Allah is capable of

preventing what He does not permit to take place. It should be borne in mind however, that this does not mean that Allah approves of everything in existence. Allah, for instance, does not approve of disbelief, nor does He enjoin mankind the commission of the abominable, nor does He love corruption. In fact, He does not prevent these things to exist for a wise purpose known to Him. The purpose of believing in *al-Qadar* is

that it provides man with the capability of achieving good deeds knowing that life and death are in the hand of Allah, the Exalted. Hence, no one else can prolong or shorten his life-term by a single second. Once his term is over, there is none to withhold its termination. Allah says:

> And when their term has come, they cannot remain behind a single moment, nor can they get ahead of it.[19]

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[19] Q. 7:34

This belief provides man with the sense of security and contentment when he knows that nothing would befall him except that which has already been assigned for him. If all mankind gather to ward it off him, they would not be able to do so, nor would they be able to grant him what Allah has withheld from him. And because man knows that his duty is to pursue all available legal means to earn his living, he also knows the results remain in the hand of Allah. Among the issues discussed earlier, in which we are obliged to believe, are things that are neither tangible nor can they be defined by the senses. What is our attitude towards these things ?

The Belief in *al-Ghaib*.[20]

Believing in *al-ghaib* is also a central fundamental in Islam. Allah has endowed us with the ability to believe in it. Man cannot perceive the essence of Allah, His nature, or attributes with his senses, nor can he imagine them in his mind, and yet he sees the effects of Allah's existence, and His disposal of the affairs of the universe. Of the greatest graces that Allah conferred on man is enabling him to believe submissively in the issues of *al-ghaib*.

Among the issues of *al-ghaib* in which we submissively believe without conceiving their nature is the soul. If the belief in *al-ghalib* is not acquired, man would have lost many fundamentals of his faith. Man would have lacked the belief in

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20 *Al-Ghaib* , the world that is hidden from , or beyond the perception by senses unless by means of divine revelation with which the Prophet, peace be upon him, has acquainted the Muslims such as the events of the Day of Resurrection, and of Jannah and Hell.

Allah, His angels , the Final Day, and other *ghaib* matters. Belief in *al-ghalib* is important enough that Allah considers as one of the most particular characteristics of the God-fearing people. Allah says :

> This is the Book, wherein there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are God-fearing. Who believe in the *ghaib*, perform prayer, and spend out of what We have provided them.[21]

It is good enough reason for us to believe in *al- ghaib* as Allah, the Exalted, is the One who has informed us about it by the tongue of His Messenger, peace be upon him. Consequently, he who does not believe in *al-ghaib* denies Allah and His Messengers , peace be upon them all.

The *Shari'ah* and the *Deen*

The *Shari'ah* [22] is part of the *Deen*, or faith. The application of which is an act of

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[21] Q. 2:3

[22] The divine laws consisting of ordinances and acts of worship such as fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, and

ibadah, or worship in itself, for *ibadah* signifies obedience to Allah by adhering to His commands, and refraining from His prohibitions.

Allah has commanded us to adhere to what He has sent down to us. Allah says:

> Adhere to what has been sent down to you from your *Rubb*.

And He says :

> And (say) this is My path leading straight. So follow it, and do not follow other ways lest they lead you away from His way.[23]

Allah has made manifest in His Book everything mankind need, and has been interpreted and expounded perfectly, and sufficiently by His Messenger, peace be upon him. All of which is preserved, and made available to all at all times and places. The main objective of Islam is to preserve the following basics:

1- The *Deen*

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all the other acts of worship, or the acts of obedience to Allah.

[23] Q. 6:153

Allah has passed the laws and ordinances, sent the Messengers, and revealed His Books to preserve the *deen*, and guard it against deviation, and to dedicate all acts of worship to Allah alone. He has prescribed the *Jihad* in order to keep His Word supreme, .and to efface the barriers that bar men from worshipping their *Rubb*.

2- The Intellect

Islam prohibits everything that incapacitates the intellect whether it is food, drink, or the like. Allah says:

> Verily, the liquor, gambling, the idols, and divining arrows are only abomination of Satan's work.[24]

3- The Individual

Islam prohibits too, everything that destroys the individual. A person is not allowed to inflict any harm upon himself, or

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[24] Q. 5:9

to commit suicide. Inflicting harm upon others is also prohibited, and so is killing others or giving them what may weaken them physically. Hence requital in the cases of homicide is legitimized for the protection of man's life. Executing an evil person is better than sparing his life to kill more people. There is no sense in showing mercy to the murderer, and depriving the victimized of it, i.e. the victim's family.

4- The Property

Earning one's own living, and making money are legitimate quests, and so is preserving them. Wasting wealth is unlawful, and spending it extravagantly on lawful things is prohibited in Islam. Allah says:

> Eat and drink, and do not be wasteful.

It is unlawful for a person to abuse his own wealth, or abuse the wealth of others. It is not permissible for any one to help himself to others' properties without their consent. It is prohibited to possess people's

property illegally. It is for this reason that the thief's hand is amputated as a punishment. Similarly, usury is prohibited to safeguard people's properties against abusiveness.

5- The Honor

Islam protects man's honor, and prohibits libeling, or abusing the honor, or reputation of the others. Therefore Islam preserves the right of people to protect their honor, and renders it inviolable, and the abuse of which is made punitive.

After this review of the five basic necessities that *Shari'ah* purposed to preserve, we must know the sources of the *Shari'ah* from which we deduce the laws, and rulings.

THE *Shari'as'* Sources

The sources of the *Shari'ah* are the Qur'an, and the Sunnah of the Messenger,

peace be upon him, which is the explanation of the Qur'an. The scholars have exerted great efforts for the deduction of rulings from these two great sources. Since the Islamic Shari'ah is the last of all divine laws, it is designed to suit every age and place. Hence, the judicial rulings deduced by the jurists are not alike, because such rulings are based on their understanding of the texts. The deduced rulings referred to as *al-fiqh.*[25], or jurisprudence, where later compiled by different imams. There are four renowned *madthahibs*[26], or schools of thoughts established by different imams or scholars, whose teachings were widespread, and adhered to by large number of students. The four schools of thoughts are:

1- Al-Hanafi *madth'hab*, by Imam Abu Hanifa, (d.150/767).

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25 The science which deals with observance of the acts of worship, transactions, and the like.

26 Pl. of *madth-hab*, school of law.

2- Ash Shafiee, by Imam Muhammad bin Idrees ash-Shafi'ee (d 205/820).

3- Al-Malikee, by Imam Malik bin Anas (d 179/795).

4- Al-Hanbali, by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d 241/855).

A person who is incapable of comprehending rulings, or deducing them from the Book and the Sunnah, he may consult any trustworthy man of knowledge who is known to be adhering to the correct conviction of *ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah.*

AL-JIHAD

In order to preserve Islam, and convey it to people at large, and to remove the obstacles in its way, Allah, the Exalted, has decreed *jihad* as a legitimate institution or warfare. *Jihad* also is meant to deliver man from those who enslave them, and from submissiveness to men, such as rulers,

and *shaiks*, and to stop them from grave, tree, stone worshipping, and from all other idols, and make them submit to Allah alone after having lived in the darkness of ignorance bereft of the light of the truth. In other words, *jihad* is legitimized to help people shun worshipping their fellow men to worship the *Rubb* of men, and replace them the straitness of this world with the ampleness of the world to come.

Having reviewed the principles of Islam, we realize that it is incumbent upon us, as individuals and community, to apply them all.

The Duties Incumbent on the Individual

Every individual in the community has rights, and is charged with duties. In brief, the rights that are due on individuals are four:

1- The rights of Allah.

2- The person's own Rights.

3- The rights of human beings.

4- The rights of the creatures, and all that is in the possession of man that are lawful to use, or utilize.

It is the duty of every true Muslim to know these four types of rights, and to fulfill them truthfully and sincerely. The *Shari'ah* has clearly defined each type of these rights separately, and has directed man to the methods and ways of fulfilling these rights in such a manner that none of these

rights may be neglected within the scope of man's ability.

THE RIGHTS OF ALLAH:

The first of Allah's rights is believing in Him, as the only true God, Who deserves to be worshipped alone, associating no partner with Him, nor taking gods or lords beside, or instead of Him. This right may be fulfilled by believing in the *Kalimah* , meaning: "There is no true god except Allah, as explained earlier.

The second of Allah's rights is to submit completely to the truth and guidance that came down from Him by following His Messenger, Muhammad, peace be upon him, and this is the meaning of "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", the second part of the Testimony of Faith.

The third of Allah's rights is that He must be obeyed by adhering to His laws that are made manifest in the Glorious Book of

Allah, and expounded by the Sunnah, of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.

The fourth of Allah's rights is the fulfillment by man the above-mentioned duties with which Allah has charged him. One must sacrifice his own as well as the rights of his fellow-human beings for the sake of this right. When a Muslim for instance, performs prayer, or observes fasting, he in fact, sacrifices many of his particular requirements. He wakes up early in the morning to perform ablution for the dawn prayer. He leaves behind many of his important occupations more than once during the day and night to perform his prayer. He also refrains from eating and drinking, and restrains himself just to observe fasting throughout the month of Ramadhan. A Muslim gives preference to the love of Allah over his love of wealth when giving out the *Zakah*, and he endures hardships of the Pilgrimage trip, leaving behind his beloved ones, and his business,

and expends from his wealth to perform this duty. He also sacrifices his wealth and life in the *jihad* for the sake of Allah alone. Besides that, a Muslim sacrifices many of his possessions, i.e. slaughtering sacrificial animals, as well as expending in charity.

Allah , the Exalted, on the other hand, has put limits to the fulfillment of His rights so that He may not overburden His slaves. Take prayer for instance, Allah does not impose hardship on His slaves for performing it. If water is not available, or if a person is sick, he may perform *tayammum*.[27] A traveling person may shorten some of the obligatory prayers. Or if a person is sick, he may perform his prayer while sitting, or even lying down. The Qur'anic recitation during the course of prayer, on the other hand, does not have to

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27 The purification by sand or dust instead of water, replacing the customary ablution. the substitution is made if water is not available or if, for health reasons, one cannot use water.

be long. If a person is not in a hurry, he may take his time reciting longer chapter such as *surat* al-Baqarah, Aali Imran, an-Nisa, or any other long chapter. It is not permissible though for an *imam*, who leads the prayer, to prolong praying period by reciting longer chapter, for there may be behind him those who are sick, or weak of whom he must be considerate.

Allah loves that His slaves perform supererogatory prayers following the obligatory prayers, but not to the point of depriving them of sleep and rest, or on account of earning one's living, nor to the point of neglecting one's own rights altogether, or the rights of other slaves of Allah.

The same applies to fasting. Allah has made obligatory observing fast of the month of Ramadhan only. Even then, when a person happens to be sick, or on a journey during that month, it is permissible for him to defer observing fast until he is well again,

or when he returns home. He may make up the number of days that are missed out after Ramadhan. On the other hand, it is not permissible to add an extra minute to the fasting period of the day, nor to delete a minute there from. The fasting person may, during the night in Ramadhan, eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to him from the black thread of the dawn. Once it is sunset, a person must break his fast right away.

Although Allah loves His slaves to observe voluntary fasting, He does not like them to continue fasting for more than one day without taking food or drink. Such observance drains the energy, and incapacitates man.

Islam has imposed as *Zakah* only a fraction percentage to be given out in charity. It is only imposed on those who are liable for *Zakah*. Although Allah loves those who expend in His cause, yet He does not want His slave to forfeit his rights, or his

wealth for charity and be left empty handed. Rather a person must keep within the reasonable limits when it comes to expending in charity.

Now consider the *fardh* of *Hajj*, or pilgrimage. It is obligatory only on those who can afford it financially and health-wise, and can endure the hardship of the journey. To make it even easier, Allah has made this rite obligatory once in a lifetime. Moreover, if a person is worried about his safety, or does not have ready funds, he may defer the trip until such time when the trip becomes affordable.

It is also imperative that the person who intends to perform Pilgrimage that he should seek his parents' permission lest they may be inconvenienced by his absence, due to their old age or disability. It has thus, become clear that Allah has given consideration to many rights of His slaves on account of His Own. Glory be to Allah.

The greatest sacrifice man offers is in the *jihad*. Man in the *jihad*, sacrifices his as well as the others' wealth and lives just seeking the pleasure of Allah, keeping His word the supreme. Even then, Allah commands the *mujahid* to kill only those who must be killed, not to attack the disable, women, children or the wounded. He also commands them to fight only those who fight them from the people of falsehood, and not to act injuriously and corruptly in the enemy's land unnecessarily, or insensibly. Moreover, they must apply justice in dealing with the enemy if they conquer their land, and to observe any treaty they enter with them. If the enemy has given up fighting and resisting the truth, and cease to support the falsehood, the *mujahideen* must stop fighting them. All this signifies that Allah, the Exalted, permitted only this indispensable sacrifice on the part of His slaves in order that they fulfill His right.

The Individual's Own Rights

We now discuss the second part of rights man owes himself. Man may afflict injustice upon himself more than afflicting it upon others, because every one feels and believes that his own self is dearer to him than anyone else. There is no one who believes that he is his own enemy. But if you reflect upon this issue, the truth becomes clear to you.

One of the most distinctive, and innate point of weakness, is that when man is possessed by a desire, he would entirely succumb to it unmindful of whatever harm he may encounter, whether being aware of it or not. An alcoholic may suffer greatly jeopardizing his health, wealth , and

reputation for the sake of satisfying his addiction. Another, has been enslaved by his psychological desires, doing things that lead him into destruction. These are only samples of many demeritorious social facets denoting man's immoderation in this world that we encounter every now and then.

Since the *Shari'ah* is set for man's prosperity and happiness, it lays, therefore, a stress on the rule that is laid down by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, that dictates: "Indeed, your own self has a right upon you." This rule restrains man from taking any harmful thing, i.e., liquor, drugs, and any other intoxicating matters. This rule also declares as unlawful the consumption of the flesh of dead animal, swine, and the flesh of the wild carnivorous, or venomous animals. These animals are hazardous to man's health, mental faculty, manners, and spirit. In return, the Islamic laws have made lawful for him every good, pure and

healthy thing, instructing him not to deprive himself of such good things., for you owe your body a right.

The *Shari'ah* forbids nudity, and commands man to enjoy the ornaments that Allah has granted in this world, but commands him too, to cover his body, and in particular, those parts of his body that are indecent to expose. The *Shari'ah*, on the other hand, commands man to exert his effort to earn his living, not to stay home jobless, or beg for food and other needs, Rather, the *Shari'ah* encourages man to utilize the faculties that Allah has granted him, to earn his living through the legitimate ways and means that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth for his happiness, comfort, and nourishment.

The *Shari'ah* does not demand man to suppress, his desire all the way, rather, it enjoins marriage on him, that he may satisfy his sexual needs. It makes it unlawful for him to degrade himself by shunning

moderate pleasures. The *Shari'ah* suggests that if man seeks spiritual uplifting, nearness to Allah, and safety in the Hereafter, he does not need to neglect this world. Obeying Allah while enjoying His graces, refraining from the acts of disobedience, and following His laws is the most effective means of success and prosperity in this world, and in the world to come.

The *Shari'ah* prohibits man from committing suicide, because man's own life does not belong to him. It is Allah who owns it. Allah has entrusted man with it that he may use it for a limited period of time, not to abuse it, or terminate it with his own hand.

The Rights of human beings

Shari'ah has commanded man to fulfill his own rights, on one hand, while, on the

other, it has commanded him to do so without encroaching on the rights of others. If a person fulfills his desires in this manner, he would defile and injure himself. It is for this reason the *Shari'ah* has made unlawful robbing, stealing, bribery, treachery, forgery, treason, usury, and the like. Any profit or interest accrued through such methods would be accrued on account of others. *Shari'ah* prohibits all games of chance, because whatever gain a gambler may make out of gambling, or lottery, it would be based on the losses of thousands of people. Prohibited too are all forms of bartering that involve cheating, or deceiving, and all other financial transactions that may entail injustice to one of the two parties.

Homicide, promoting corruption on earth, and transgression are all prohibited. No one is allowed to kill or hurt another, or embezzle his property, for the sake of satisfying his thirst for revenge.

Fornication is prohibited along with other evil deeds, that endanger the health and the conduct, and lead to promiscuity, flippancy, and recklessness in society. Such acts also cause fatal diseases, damage human relations, and rock the bases of civilization.

These are restrictions that the Islamic *Shari'ah* has imposed on man so that a person may not plunder the rights of others, or diminish them in the course of securing his own.

Encroaching on the rights of others does not help reaching the objective of the advancement of human civilization. It is rather important that human relations be based on mutual cooperation on issues of common social interests to reach that objective.

The following synopsis include excerpts of the *Shari'ah*'s laws for this purpose.

A . Human relations begin with the family which should be considered before anything else. The family, in fact, is the

unit comprising two spouses and their children. The foundation upon which Islam bases the family is the fact that the husband's duty is to earn the family's living, meet its needs, and defend it. While the wife's duty is to manage the domestic affairs of the family, to provide all means of comfort for her husband and children, and to look after the children. The children's duty, on the other hand, is to obey their parents, respect them, and to be in their service when they reach old age.

In order to keep the family system on the right direction, Islam has opted two measures:

The first, the husband, or the father as the head of the family, and the manager of its affairs. It is impossible to render the family's system sound without having the father as its ruler and manager. Chaos and disorder would definitely prevail in a family of which each member imposes his own opinion, on the rest of the family members,

being irresponsible about the consequences of his actions. Such family would definitely lack the sense of security, and happiness. In order to eliminate this corruptness, the family must have a head to run its affairs. It is only man who can be responsible for looking after the family and protecting it.

The second measure, having charged man with the duty of handling the external affairs of the family, the *Shari'ah* commands woman to stay home, not to go out unnecessarily. Woman, accordingly, is relieved of the exterior duties to enable her to fulfill the internal duties peacefully so that the home order may not be disturbed by her outing.

This of course, does not mean that it is not permissible for woman to go out. She may do so whenever there is a need for it. Thus to keep home as the natural environment of her duties utilizing her energy and intelligence in raising her

children to become good Muslim, capable of enduring life's burdens.

The family circle grows wider by blood relations and intermarriages. In order that the members of this circle maintain cooperation and support among themselves, the *Shari'ah* has provided them with wise rules, of which are:

1- It is unlawful for the members of the same family to marry each other i.e., the siblings, the mother and her son, the father and his daughter, the step-father and the step-daughter, the step-mother and her step-son, and the brother and sister, and her milk-brother, and the uncle and his niece, and the aunt and her nephew, and the mother-in-law and her son-in-law, and the father-in-law and his daughter-in-law.

Among the other purposes of illegalising such matrimonial relations between siblings is helping the family members to retain pure, and natural relationship. Intermingling with each other,

the siblings exchange mutual love and sincerity without suspicions or inconvenience.

2- Islam has legalized matrimonial relations between the other members of the family circles to strengthen their ties and love. Those who understand each other's preferences, and customs would usually have more successful marriages than those who do not. It is for this reason Islam recommends the guardians to give their daughters in marriage to competent men.

3- The family circle may comprise the rich and the poor. Hence, of all human rights, Islam considers as most outstanding the right of kinship. Such right is referred to in the *Shari'ah* as '*silat ar-rahm*', that is maintaining good relations with one's own kin. This kinship is emphasized in many places in the Qur'an, and the Sunnah. Severing this relation is one of the gravest sins. If a poor member of the family suffers a misfortune, it becomes incumbent

upon the well-off members of his family to help, and support him. One's own relatives, deserve his charity more than the outsiders.

4- Islam has organized the laws of inheritance division. When a person dies leaving behind an estate, the ownership of this estate transfers to the legal heirs of the deceased. The estate left behind by the deceased must not remain within the hand of a single heir. Rather each heir is entitled to a share of that estate, in accordance with the Qur'anic guideline of inheritance division. The estate, thus is distributed among many heirs of the deceased relatives.

The Islamic law of inheritance division is second to none in the world's ancient or modern man-made laws. There are some nations, in this age that have started applying the Islamic laws of inheritance.

Some Muslim have, unfortun- ately begun to disregard the laws of inheritance due to their ignorance, and simple-

mindedness. The malaise of depriving girls from their rightful share of inheritance has begun to be felt. It is abhorrent injustice, and a rebellion against the pertinent conspicuous statutes of the Qur'an.

Beyond the family relations, a person comes in contact with his friends, neighbors, people in his district, and town, as well as those with whom he may deal in his daily life. Islam enjoins dealing with such people on the basis of truthfulness, fairness, and good behavior. In other words, he must treat others in the same manner he would like them to treat him. A person should keep his mischief away from them as he likes them to keep theirs away from him out of cooperating on righteous deeds and fine manners.

There is, of course priorities with respect to man's relations with others. The closest to him are his immediate kinship members, followed by his neighbors. It is mentioned in the authentic, Prophetic

traditions that Jibreel persisted in recommending to the Prophet, peace be upon him, treating neighbors with comely manner until he thought that Jibreel would assign a share from the inheritance to the neighbor. This only signifies the greatness of the neighbors' right even if he happens to be non-Muslim. The Prophet, peace be upon him, visited a neighbor of his who was a Jew. There are other duties upon the Muslim, that is to give food and clothing to the poor among the Muslims, help their handicapped, and console their less fortunate, visit their sick, help out the needy, earn living for his family, and teach the misguided. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim. He neither oppresses him, nor does he let him down. Allah says :

> And help one another in righteousness, and piety; but do not help one another in erring and transgression.[28]

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[28] Q. 5:2

And He says:

> Verily, only the believers are brothers.[29]

There are many other kinds of relations between Muslim and those to whom a Muslim feels obliged , such as those referred to in the words of Allah :

> And if anyone of the idolaters seek your protection, then grant him protection, so that he may hear the words of Allah (the Qur'an) , and then escort him to his secure place.[30]

From this limited circle we move into the universal circle which comprises all Muslims of the world. Islam has constituted laws and regulations to make the Muslims support each other, and help one another in righteousness and piety thus to provide for themselves an environment in which their lives and honor are protected within certain regulations:

1- Islam prohibits indiscriminate intermingling of non-sibling, men and

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[29] Q.49:10
[30] Q. 9:6

women to restrain the behavior and safeguard the Muslim's reputation. Allah commands his slaves to avoid looking at things that are unlawful to look at, i.e., men to avoid looking at stranger women, and women at stranger men, because eye-contact is the first step of establishing relation.

Allah says:

> And tell the believers to lower their gaze and guard their private parts (of their bodies from illegal sexual acts.) That is purer for them.

Allah has designated duties for women that are hard for men to observe, and has designated for men duties that are hard for women to observe. He commands women to stay home to maintain tranquillity and comfort in it. Allah has made the wife a garment for her husband, and an abode of rest. Man, on the other hand, toils outside home to earn the family's living, and when he returns home, he needs rest and comfort that he finds available with his wife who

stays home preparing food, and looking after the domestic duties.

On the opposite side, the wife who works in shops, restaurants, factories, or other occupations, returns home at the end of the day to be just like her husband, too exhausted to be able to combine between her own comfort and her husband's.

2- Islam has forbidden women to beautify themselves, and display their beauty in public. Doing so would cause harm to men by exciting their desires, and luring them into illicit acts. This prohibition protects women against any consequences of such behavior. Both sexes are commanded to wear the garment which suites it in a way that does not excite the other.

3- Islam abhors singing and musical entertainment, because they degenerate peoples' morals, and arouse their lower desires, waste their time and money, and affect their health.

4- As a means of preserving the the Muslims' unity, and their harmony, Allah has commanded them to avoid discord amongst themselves, and shun all means of conflict. If they have any dispute, they must refer it to the Book of Allah, and the Sunnah of His Messenger, peace be upon him, and commit their affairs to Allah alone. The Muslims are commanded to support each other in order to achieve success, and harmony. They must obey their authority, and ostracize those among them who create commotion, and strife in the community, lest their power falters, and expose their own nation to enemy while warring against themselves.

5- The Muslims are permitted to study science, and other human arts, and to learn beneficial methods from the non-Muslims. They are forbidden, however, from imitating the unbelievers' way of life. Only the nation that admits defeat, and humiliation tries to copy what is believed to

be a superior nation. This imitation reflects the lowest form of slavery. Degradation is an open recognition of the inevitable consequences of imitation. It is for this reason the Prophet, peace be upon him, vehemently forbade copying the foreign nations, or adopting their way of life. It is quite understandable that the Muslim nation's power does not depend on the dress code, nor on the life style of the foriegn nations. Rather it depends on the strong faith in the Oneness of Allah, and the adherence to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. The nation's power also depends on its wealth of knowledge, and organization. Therefore, he who seeks power, and perfection, must avoid imitating the Kafir (unbelievers) nations.

The Muslims are also forbidden to treat the non-Muslim through the parochial mentality, and fanaticism. The Muslims are even forbidden to abuse the gods of the

unbelievers or insult their denominations so that the latter would not revile Allah ignorantly. The Muslims are also prohibited to initiate disputes with the non-Muslims. Rather the Muslims should invite them to Islam instead, as long as the unbelievers are seeking reconciliation, and peace with Muslims. They should offer them the chance of discovering the religion of Allah.

Our Islamic manners dictate that we should invite the non-Muslims to the religion of Allah of which He approves. The Muslim must set himself to be a good example for others to follow. The Muslims must show the non-belligerent un-believers the fine Islamic manners. It is un-Islamic to treat others harshly, because the Muslim is supposed to be a model of refined manners and pertinence, that he may attract others into the folds of Islam without humiliation nor indifference. Furthermore, the Muslim are commanded to extend

protection to those who seek it among the unbelievers.

Allah says :

> And if anyone of the idolaters seek your protection, then grant him protection, so that he may hear the words of Allah (the Qur'an) , and then escort him to his secure place.

Thus Allah has commanded the Muslim to give protection to an unbeliever who asks for it, and invite him to the truth before escorting him to safety.

The Rights of the Rest of Creation

Allah has distinguished man over many of His creatures, and permitted him to utilize them as he chooses after having subjecting them to him. This is a part of man's legitimate right, being the best of creatures on earth. In return, Allah has charged man with certain obligations towards these creatures. Of such obligations; man must not abuse, harm, or endanger these creatures unnecessarily, unless there is no alternative. Man must

choose the best way of utilizing these creatures, and enjoy them in the best possible way.

There are many rulings in the *Shari'ah* that deal with this issue. Man is permitted to kill animals only for food, or for protecting himself from their danger. There is a stern warning against killing animals senselessly, or for the fun of doing so. As for animal that are killed for human consumption, there is a designated method for slaughtering them. It is the best method for utilizing their meat for food. Any method other than the Islamic one, regardless how humane it may appear, would only lessen the benefit of the animals meat, and if it is less humane, it would subject the animal to more torture. Islam recommends neither methods.

Killing animals in a harsh way is strictly forbidden in Islam. Exterminating dangerous, and venomous animals is permissible only because human life is more

precious than such animals' life. Even then, Islam forbids subjecting these animal to torture. Starving animals that are used for hauling and toiling, overburdening them, or beating them harshly is prohibited in Islam. So is trapping birds without valid reason. Islam does not allow destroying trees senselessly, let alone harming animals. We may harvest the fruits off the trees, or the flowers, but not to destroy them or uproot them unnecessarily. wasting lifeless things such as water, or the like is not permissible either.

The Perpetual Universal *Shari'ah*

The foregoing is just a synopsis of the laws, and regulations of the chaste *Shari'ah* with which our Prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon him, is sent to mankind at large.

Only the correct creed, and deed are the criteria for distinguishing one man over another in Islam. In fact, man-made laws, and religions that distinguish between one man and another on the basis of lineage,

country of origin, color, and wealth are not fit to be universal religion, because, in such religions, it is impossible for a member of one race to excel over another from a lower race. Such denominations may be restricted to one particular nation only. In the face of all these denominations, Islam has introduced the universal *Shari'ah* which is open to anyone who upholds its creed, i.e., the Testimony of Faith that signifies: **(Their is no true god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah)**, and enjoy, as a result the same rights that all other Muslims do. There is no consideration given in the Islamic *Shari'ah* to lineage, language, country of origin, color, or wealth.

Besides, the Islamic *Shari'ah* is perpetual. Its laws are not based on norms of a certain nation, or one particular age. Rather it is assigned to fulfill man's needs in every age and everywhere, for the One Who has legislated it is the One Who created

man. He knows what suits man's nature best at all ages and everywhere.

The last of our supplications is:
"All praise is due to the *Rubb* of the worlds."

هذا الكتاب يحتوي على:

- معنى الإسلام وحقيقته.
- السبيل إلى معرفة أمر الله وشرعه.
- معرفة الأنبياء والدلائل على صدقهم.
- أركان الإسلام والإيمان.
- بيان أن تطبيق الشريعة عبادة لله وأنها جاءت لحفظ الضرورات الخمس (الدين، والعقل، والنفس، والمال، والعرض).
- مصادر الشريعة.
- الجهاد في سبيل الله.
- الحقوق الواجبة على الأفراد.

مبادئ الإسلام

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